News Release
Ministry of Northern Development and Mines

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Northern Ontario Heritage Fund
Fonds du patrimoine du Nord de l'Ontario

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McGuinty Government Continues To Spur New Telecommunications And Energy Investments In The North

Event Photo(s)

NOHFC Program Enhancements Focus On "Connecting" The North And Business Energy Needs

SAULT STE. MARIE – New programs designed to accelerate telecommunications infrastructure development and to encourage Northern Ontario businesses and communities to use renewable energy are among the funding initiatives announced today by Northern Development and Mines Minister Rick Bartolucci.

"The McGuinty government was very clear three years ago that it intended to refocus the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to support job creation and economic development," said Bartolucci, who is also Chair of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund (NOHFC). "We have delivered on that commitment and continue to work with our northern stakeholders to make improvements along the way that better serve their needs and those of our communities."

Key changes to NOHFC programs include a renewed focus for the Emerging Technology Program. The program will encourage investment in telecommunications infrastructure projects that could bring broadband Internet and cellular service to most of the North within three years.

In addition, the NOHFC is introducing a new Northern Energy Program to help private and public sector partners pursue clean renewable energy generation capacity to reduce their demand on external energy sources or to produce energy for sale to the electrical grid. This program includes support for renewable energy initiatives, new internal energy generation projects as well as energy conservation pilot projects.

"Our government has played an important role in improving the communication capabilities of northerners through the NOHFC by bringing broadband and cellular services to more remote areas of our region with the help of community based organizations like ADnet in Sault Ste. Marie," said Sault Ste. Marie MPP David Orazietti, who participated in today's announcement. "The new energy program will also be an important catalyst for encouraging new business and industrial investments in our northern communities."

Other NOHFC programs will continue to provide new opportunities for Northern Ontario youth career training, youth entrepreneurship, private sector business and industrial investment, as well as public-private partnerships across the North. Northern communities will continue to benefit from ongoing support to improve strategic infrastructure and invest in economic development activities that will boost job creation and economic growth in Northern Ontario.

"Since October 2003, we have committed more than $197 million in some 900 northern projects, which have created or sustained nearly 7,400 jobs across the North," said Bartolucci. "These newly revised programs will increase the NOHFC's capacity to work with its northern partners to build a strong economy, while supporting vital projects that improve the quality of life in Northern Ontario."

The NOHFC is an important component of the government's Northern Prosperity Plan for building stronger northern communities. The Northern Prosperity Plan has four pillars: Strengthening the North and its Communities; Listening to and Serving Northerners Better; Competing Globally; and Providing Opportunities for All. Since 2003, investments in infrastructure, postsecondary education, research and innovation and key economic sectors have helped strengthen Ontario's economic foundations and continue to build opportunity.

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Contacts:

Laura Blondeau
Minister's Office – Sudbury
(705) 564-7454

Michel Lavoie
MNDM - Sudbury
(705) 564-7125

www.nohfc.com

www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca

Backgrounder

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation Programs

The focus of the **Emerging Technology Program** is being directed at telecommunications infrastructure investments that would strive to connect up to 99 per cent of Northern Ontario within three years. High speed Internet and cellular expansion initiatives will particularly be encouraged. The program will also continue to encourage both the private and public sectors to develop viable new technologies that will contribute to future northern prosperity. In addition, the NOHFC will invest in projects that develop a successful film and television production industry in the North.

The newly introduced **Northern Energy Program** replaces the Small Business Energy Conservation Program. It will assist eligible northern organizations to capitalize on energy opportunities. It will encourage private and public sector partners to pursue clean renewable energy generation capacity that

will reduce their demand on external energy sources. This program includes support for renewable energy initiatives to help mitigate incremental costs of doing business in Northern Ontario, new internal energy generation projects as well as energy conservation pilot projects.

Other existing programs of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund include:

The **Enterprises North Job Creation Program**, which provides financial assistance to the private sector to support initiatives that bring new jobs and economic benefits to Northern Ontario. Eligible costs under this program include capital costs related to the expansion or establishment of businesses in the North that result in job creation in Northern Ontario.

The **Northern Ontario Youth Internship and Co-op Program**, which helps northern employers invest in training young people and preparing them for future employment in the North. Under this program, the NOHFC may now provide more than one year of funding for an intern if that experience is required to receive a professional designation.

The **Young Entrepreneur Program**, designed to help young northerners develop their business skills and start their own full-time businesses. Residents of Northern Ontario, 18 to 29 years of age, may receive up to $25,000 to start a new business in the North.

The **Infrastructure and Community Development Program**, which helps northern communities improve strategic infrastructure and invest in economic development activities that create jobs. Municipalities, First Nations and community agencies may receive up to $1 million for projects including industrial parks, waterfront development, and the development of community facilities that create jobs in the North. Small capital projects to enable a community to realize economic development opportunities are also eligible.

Full program details and applications forms are now available from the NOHFC website at www.nohfc.com or may be obtained from ServiceOntario/Government Information Centres and Ministry of Northern Development and Mines offices.

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Contacts:

Laura Blondeau
Minister's Office – Sudbury
(705) 564-7454

Michel Lavoie
MNDM/NOHFC – Sudbury
(705) 564-7125

www.nohfc.com

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